



## News Release

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### **A Decade of Gold Medal Schools**

Salt Lake City, UT - Healthier food options, walking to different parts of the world locally, and staying tobacco free are some of the changes and activities several schools throughout Utah have introduced and adopted during the first 10 years of Gold Medal Schools program (GMS). GMS was launched by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) in the 2001-2002 school year, the year the 2002 Olympic Winter Games were held in Utah.

In the initial year, 47 schools achieved the bronze level, the first level in the GMS program. Ten years later, there are 373 participating schools throughout the State that are in any given level of GMS.

"We're very proud to look back and see how many schools and students have accepted the GMS challenge," said Sarah Rigby, UDOH GMS Coordinator for the past six years. "They've embraced the messages of eating better, being more active, and saying 'no' to tobacco, all lifestyle changes that will be used throughout their lives," she added.

"We could not have had accomplished what we have these past 10 years if it wasn't for the contributions of all 12 local health departments and school principals, mentors and GMS coordinators," said Rigby.

Other GMS partners have included Intermountain HealthCare, the PTA, the State Office of Education, and many other organizations.

The GMS program continues to help schools create and implement policies that lead to changes in their environments. Those changes include, among others, providing a place for students to walk, holding recess before lunch so kids are more ready to eat, and not using or withholding food as a reward or a punishment.

To find a list of the schools that have achieved a level in the GMS Program, visit <http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/gms/pdfs/Schools.pdf> or, to learn more about the GMS program, visit [www.health.utah.gov/obesity/gms](http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity/gms).

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*